

Appl. No. : 10/642,799
Filed : August 18, 2003

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please amend Claims 113 and 119.

Please add new Claims 120-127.

1.-112. (Canceled)

113. (Currently amended) A method of supporting a semiconductor wafer, comprising:
supporting a wafer on a susceptor;

providing one or more dividing structures to substantially fluidly separate a region immediately above the susceptor from a region immediately below the susceptor;

permitting gas to flow through the susceptor between the regions immediately above and immediately below the susceptor;

supporting the susceptor on a plurality of support arms, each of the support arms comprising a first portion that extend extends generally radially outward and upward from an upper section of a substantially vertical shaft and a second portion that extends generally upward from the first portion, wherein a central vertical axis of the shaft being is aligned with a central vertical axis of the susceptor, the second portion of each of the arms engaging the susceptor such that rotation of the shaft about the central vertical axis of the shaft causes the susceptor to rotate about the central vertical axis of the susceptor;
and

rotating the shaft about the central vertical axis of the shaft.

114. (Original) The method of Claim 113, further comprising providing radiant energy to the wafer and susceptor.

115. (Original) The method of Claim 113, wherein the support arms and the shaft are transparent to radiant energy.

116. (Original) The method of Claim 113, wherein supporting the wafer on the susceptor comprises supporting the wafer on a plurality of spacers extending upwardly from an upper surface of the susceptor, such that the wafer is slightly spaced from the upper surface.

117. (Original) The method of Claim 113, wherein permitting gas to flow through the susceptor comprises permitting gas to flow through one or more gas flow passages in the susceptor, each of the one or more passages having an upper opening at an upper surface of the susceptor and a lower opening at a lower surface of the susceptor.

118. (Original) The method of Claim 117, wherein the one or more passages include horizontal channels inside the susceptor.

119. (Currently amended) The method of Claim 113, wherein supporting the susceptor comprises inserting upper ends of the second portions of the support arms into cavities within a lower surface of the susceptor, each of the cavities positioned along a circle centered on the central vertical axis of the shaft.

120. (New) A method of supporting a semiconductor wafer, comprising:
supporting a wafer on a susceptor;
permitting gas to flow through the susceptor between regions above and below the susceptor;

supporting the susceptor on a plurality of support arms that extend generally radially outward and upward from an upper section of a substantially vertical shaft, a central vertical axis of the shaft being aligned with a central vertical axis of the susceptor, the arms engaging the susceptor such that rotation of the shaft about the central vertical axis of the shaft causes the susceptor to rotate about the central vertical axis of the susceptor, wherein gas flows through one or more of the support arms; and
rotating the shaft about the central vertical axis of the shaft.

121. (New) The method of Claim 120, further comprising providing radiant energy to the wafer and susceptor.

122. (New) The method of Claim 120, wherein the support arms and the shaft are transparent to radiant energy.

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123. (New) The method of Claim 120, wherein supporting the wafer on the susceptor comprises supporting the wafer on a plurality of spacers extending upwardly from an upper surface of the susceptor, such that the wafer is slightly spaced from the upper surface.

124. (New) The method of Claim 120, wherein permitting gas to flow through the susceptor comprises permitting gas to flow through one or more gas flow passages in the susceptor, each of the one or more passages having an upper opening at an upper surface of the susceptor and a lower opening at a lower surface of the susceptor.

125. (New) The method of Claim 124, wherein the one or more passages include horizontal channels inside the susceptor.

126. (New) The method of Claim 120, wherein supporting the susceptor comprises inserting upper ends of the support arms into cavities within a lower surface of the susceptor, each of the cavities positioned along a circle centered on the central vertical axis of the shaft.

127. (New) The method of Claim 120, wherein one or more of the support arms are hollow.